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A CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN *HOMO POETICUS*: *RUTA DOS* BY DANIEL CALABRESE[1]

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ABSTRACT:

This article reads *Ruta Dos* [Highway Number Two] by Daniel Calabrese, an Argentine poet with an outstanding literary career, from a European point of view concerning contemporary Latin American poetry. Calabrese's book has had a long-lasting impact since its awarded appearance in 2013, counting subsequent editions in Chile, Spain, Cuba, and translations into Italian, Bulgarian and Portuguese. *Ruta Dos*, as its very title indicates, fits within what is known as road literature in more than one sense. Calabrese has produced a work that is linked to the works of memory in the socio-political context of Argentina during his childhood, adolescence and early youth. For this reason, necessary mention is made about his most recent book of poetry, *Compás de espera* [Waiting Beat], which is composed with the self-reflecting memories of a young man taken as a soldier to the Falklands War in 1982.

ONE of the enigmas of today's Latin American poetry may be called *Ruta Dos* [Highway Number Two], an impressive book, whose special powerful poetics resembles a free and continuous flow of consciousness. A movement resembling a river and the wind at the same time —a high flight of the creative spirit beyond the gravity of the past, the abstraction of the future and the electromagnetic field of the present. Poetry that rises before the reader like a tall building made of light. To get to its top, one must overcome many fiery steps, each of which leads to a fall. A long fall into weightlessness between here and there, now and beyond, which is felt especially strongly in the context of the present frenzied volatility, among whose exploding shells

[1] "Homo Poeticus" is a term coined by Serbian writer Danilo Kiš in an essay, and it appeared in his 1983 book with the same title. Kiš defines *Homo Poeticus* as "the poetic animal that suffers from love as well as morality, from metaphysics as well as politics" (76); and, obviously, I portrait Calabrese's poetry within this conceptual frame, not in the Europe of the first half of twentieth century, but in the Argentina (and Latin America) of the end of twentieth century and the beginning of the twentieth-first century.

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we are fated to live. A fall during which the reader has the rare opportunity to briefly step out of the iron grip of gravity and look inward. Some readers may make it to the top of the tower. But it is certain that the climb is worthy of it, at least for dipping into the pearly waters of these sudden and "pure, wounded and often masterly, unfolded in one of the most remarkable cycles in modern poetry, poems."

The words ending the above paragraph were written by the Chilean poet Raúl Zurita, one of the greatest living Latin American dissidents from the time of the dramatic events associated with the regime of Augusto Pinochet, and author of poetry that is no less pure, wounded, and masterfully written. Zurita's preface to Daniel Calabrese's book provides with a generous and accurate account of a fellow penman, whose quintessence of his existential and literary experience is collected in this 2013 book entitled *Ruta Dos*; it is no coincidence that the collection of poems was also awarded the *Revista de Libros* prize that same year.

"Pure, wounded and often masterly . . ." are characteristics of Calabrese's poetry, which Zurita points out, which accurately describe the main elements in the process of entering into and writing about oneself like Calabrese has done it in *Ruta Dos*. The title of this book is a twofold sign indicating a geolocalization of a vital experience (life next to a highway that exists in reality) and, on the other hand, spiritual awareness of oneself and the world —the meditative path— where the inner (spiritual) and outer (material) paths converge.[2] In Calabrese's poetry, the spiritual path is more powerful and prevails over the material path in the field of the individual's existence, between the here-now and the hereafter. This second path is like a second chance to enter (without sinking, without drowning) the same existential river, or the same world, which is constantly changing. And this is especially significant today, when this world is changing so rapidly and unexpectedly, like a river trying to overflow its banks. It is the second path —or *Ruta Dos* or, according to Carl Jung, reminiscent of Heraclitus, the "regulatory function of the opposites" (56, my translation)—, a path of salvation for the current humanity in a world that seems to be disoriented. In this way the second path of spirituality is a need catharsis through which the individual and the humanity as a whole must pass. Therein lies the powerful message of Daniel Calabrese's poetry,

[2] Calabrese himself is explicit about this dual meaning of his title, see Patricio Tapia's interview with the author in 2013.

Esto es un paisaje real.
Las cosas suceden como debajo del agua,
los sonidos, tu voz, aquellos motores
que arrastran sus cargas pesadas en la ruta,
la respiración del *semáforo*, una luz,
la hiedra apretando la noche,
otras luces redondas en la plaza,
el aura densa de todos los objetos, como ungidos,
y las columnas, bajo la humedad de un cielo
donde retumba cada paso.

(Calabrese, "Cuidado con la realidad" 46)

It is a real landscape.
Things happen like underwater:
the sounds, your voice, those engines,
who drag their heavy loads along the highway,
the breathing of the traffic light, the light itself,
the ivy that binds the corps of night,
other round lights in the square,
the dense halo of all objects, as if anointed
and the columns under the humidity of sky,
where every step echoes.

["Careful with Reality"][3]

Ruta Dos is not just another large-scale poetic work that the reader, due to a combination of circumstances, discovers with some delay. *Ruta Dos* unambiguously points its way to the second path of existence: a movement inward and outward at the same time, marked by spiritual and material signs found along the metaphysical path and intuited through sudden dreams, imaginary and real omens. Verbal and radiant essence of a spirit that rises in constant dual movement. It is a radiant verbal essence of the spirit soaring in its constant dual movement. A different poetics, capable of rewarding and enlightening us at every step in the labyrinth of inner and outer routes. Its effect is comprehensive, as "this collection of poems charts a route that is at once geographical and mental, biographical and metaphysical, and which ultimately rises as an overarching metaphor for life, for traveling, and hence for loss", according to Zurita (5).

With every poem in this book, the above-mentioned effect is achieved.

Poetry about the road-as-circular movement inward and backward, outward and forward. Poetry about parallel life as a changeable river, into whose channel the free spirit could not enter twice without emerging changed in some

[3] All English translations of Calabrese's poems and Zurita's prefatory words are mine.

—though at first glance invisible— way. Poetry in which dreaming mankind tries hard to push the Stone of Meaning out of its prehistoric pit where it sits comfortably like *omphalos* (in Greek: ὀμφᾰλός) at Delphi, associated with the paradigm of the center of the world in Greek antiquity, literally translated "the navel" of the world. "El trabajo de este *día* consiste / en llevar una piedra de *aquí* para *allá*. / Es una roca muy pesada . . ., // más que una bolsa cargada de lluvia" [Today's work involves / moving a stone from here to there. / A very heavy rock . . . // more than a sack full of rain] (16). The prehistoric foundations of a stone where a black mirror beats "a punto de tragarse el mundo" [which in a moment will consume the world] along with "las generaciones ilustradas y piadosas" [enlightened and merciful generations].[4] The world as it was designed in its inception, rooted in the mysterious 'black mirror' in the reflection of which we wake today; torn apart by swirling energies and disturbing dreams erupting in the form of war. After all, it was the personal military experience that was a kind of catalyst for Daniel Calabrese (who participated in the war for the Falkland Islands in the period of April 2 to June 14, 1982) to find his true vocation, the most sublime meaning for him: writing poetry. In this sense, a cornerstone in Calabrese's poetic work is his latest *Compás de espera* (2022) [Waiting Beat], based on the poetic memory of a young Argentine soldier —the author himself— during the Falklands War [Guerra de las Malvinas, 1982]. In this book the main characters are not the winners but, on the contrary, those are the defeated ones with their romantic ideas, despairs and fears. Therefore, it is not surprising that in this poetic book the reader is shaken by extraordinary images and metaphors, such as: "Irán a combate apenas regresen los muertos, / los heridos y los cansados. / En ese orden" [They will go to battle as soon as the dead return, / the wounded and the weary. / In that order] (36). These powerful lines belong to the poem "Los números de la suerte" [The lucky numbers]. At this point, we could venture to say that both books, *Ruta Dos* and *Compás de espera* —which took four decades for Calabrese to finish it—, could be read as a kind of sequel to each other, since they share not only a sort of critical perspective of Argentina as a nation, but also themes of life-beyond-death, as well as for the *second path* of spirituality as the true path of victory of the spirit over mortal life.

Going back to *Ruta Dos*, the souls of the dead are more alive than the spirits of those who are alive, and time is only a conventional concept, dividing the void on both sides of the highway, where "quienes viven del otro lado" [those who live on the other side] welcome those who have returned

[4] Quotations from the poem "Omen" ("Prodigio").

from their long journey to the south with a special ritual: "pero sacan una piedra del vacío del ser" [but they take a stone out of the void of being]. While, "los que viven a este lado de la ruta" [Those who live on this side of the route], clearly understand the hermetic principle of Compensation and fill its existential void: "cada vez que alguien pasa rumbo al Sur / anotan la hora exacta / y dejan caer una piedra en el vacío del ser" [every time someone goes by headed toward the South / they write down the exact time / and let a stone fall into the void of being], from poem "Método para calcular el tiempo" [Method of Calculating Time] (12).

As a matter of fact, time is a very peculiar, stand-alone character in *Ruta Dos*.

Without using the tools of, for example, Alexandrian verse and hexameter, so characteristic of the classical *ars poetica* of Greek poetry from the time of Homer, but entirely with the methods and open possibilities of free verse, Daniel Calabrese manages with incredible ease to create what is so rarely seen in modern poetry: to fix time in its absence of beginning and in its infinity. Not 'time' as a calculated segment of something complete and comprehensive, but as an ephemeral breaking point in space. In his 1977 essay "The Child of Civilization", Joseph Brodsky wrote about a similar phenomenon in his analysis of Osip Mandelstam's poetics: ". . . along with producing an almost physical sensation or time's tunnel, [Mandelstam] creates an effect of a play within a play, of a caesura within a caesura, of a pause within a pause. Which is, after all, a form of time, if not its meaning: if time does not get stopped by that, it at least gets focused" (127).

A similar phenomenon is seen in the sense of the fully physical perception of space-in-time in this highly metaphysical and expressive poetry of Calabrese, which constantly points to the *second path* of spirituality. It is this particularity of his poetics that relates the poetry of the Argentine poet also to the European poetic tradition nowadays, mainly in Italy and Spain, making him one of today's most notable poets, since it is the sense of time as a concept related more to today's understanding of quantum physics rather than to conventional linearity and historicity that makes this author's poetry so interesting and filled with various creative intentions.[5]

Like a modern Parmenides, Calabrese sculpts the spherical form of Being, but in the form of a long path from the initial point of which one starts in order to arrive at the end (of life, of the road, of empirical knowledge), and again to the same existential point of being. In this sense, his powerful poetry is only partly a document of the age, insofar as any attempt at 'historicity'; i.e.,

[5] For the notion of time in Quantum theory, see Zeh (2009).

to indicate the toponymy of a bygone era, it is as hard as it is overwhelmed by a very subjective, dream-like interpretation of events, persons and signs from the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries. This kind of special semiotics in Calabrese's poetry contains a very strong system of images and concepts that function as an organic whole, constructing the independent and unique image-universe of his poems.

At the same time, it is also poetry that should be read slowly, in small doses, in a special state of humility and silence. This phenomenon has been described by Zurita in the text "The jury argues its decision: the undisputed merits of *Ruta Dos*" (*El Mercurio*, 2013) as a "strange religiosity" and "nostalgia for some non-existent place, for a time, to which one will never return as one never enters the same river twice" (E-12). This is indeed so because silence, stillness, and the poet's own careful penetration into the parallel time-space of spirituality in motion fills the core of this multi-layered poetic writing. And Zurita has in mind precisely *the second path* of spirituality as a guiding force before the material path of visible forms and things,

> Los pasajeros que viajen por primera vez
> estarán dispuestos a permanecer en silencio.
>
> (Calabrese, "A modo de proemio" 8)
>
> Those traveling for the first time,
> They will tend to remain silent.
>
> ["Instead of a Foreword"]

The silence, the stillness and the enigmatic at the beginning and end of *Ruta Dos* frame the book with the softness of a halo around the words that glow. The transcendental dimensions of road-as-river and road-as-time in Calabrese's poetry constantly intertwine, charting their own spiritual routes between transience and eternity. In this particular dichotomy, a careful reader can clearly catch the intertextual dialogue between the individual poems, as their constant references to each other, although they easily be read independently. The poems here are like streams that spring from the same river, only to flow back into it. Sometimes quite, sometimes violent streams that mirror Heraclitus's philosophical statement about the road and about the individual: "You cannot step into the same river [or road] twice". It is this fluidity of Calabrese's poetry that is part of its uncanny ability to sound different each time the reader decides to open the door of her attention to this extraordinary book.

And —as David Stern claims in "Stepping Twice into the Same River", the first part of his article "Heraclitus' and Wittgenstein's River Images:

stepping twice into the same river"— this mobility paradigm "implies an overall conception of the nature of change and continuity and the relationship between language and the world" (589). In the poetry of Daniel Calabrese, the interconnection between language and the paradigm of the world as an ever-changing river runs through the author's inner perception of the world as it could be, but not its fragmentariness, namely in its wholeness that can only be grasped through the second path of spirituality. In this sense, *Ruta Dos* represents this second path or the better way to enter the world and to achieve metaphysical knowledge-of-self: through the spiritual routes of the person who does not stop searching for her/himself throughout her/his life while changing in every single moment.

An interesting detail about the process of writing this original book is the fact that these poems were written over the course of a whole decade, but subsequently some of them were completely revised, others disappeared, others were completely new, and consequently the final result was *Ruta Dos*. The book is divided into two parts: "Kilómetro 207" [Kilometer 207] and "Maquinaria pesada" [Heavy machinery], the first referring to the personal topography of the Argentine poet: 207 kilometers away is his native Dolores, which he recalls as "la ciudad de la memoria" [the city of memory] (53). It is also important to clarify that *Ruta Dos* is not an imaginary highway or just a large-scale metaphor for the road, it is a real existing thoroughfare, one of Argentina's longest highways. During the poet's childhood, this 400 km long highway linked the capital, Buenos Aires, with the seaside city of Mar del Plata. Dedicated to the road itself and always from the point of view of the periphery, there are a few poems in *Ruta Dos*, structured metaphorically with numerous references to the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus. The book's metaphysical introspection divides the road into two: the road as a route of memory that explores and traces it; and the path to the subconscious, mysticism, emotionality, and borderline states of the self. It is the *second path* that is the Homo Poeticus's path of hope and salvation in a world of alienation, cowardly defeat, fragmentariness and hypocrisy.

The dialectical knowledge of the material world that is implicitly embedded in the philosophy of Heraclitus can also be found in Calabrese's road-river poems, who says in an interview: "In a more pedestrian sense, I always felt that being born in Dolores was being born in a place of passage, but only the presence of the route can refer to the city as a place halfway. Somehow, also on a physical plane, the route was our river and divided us in two" (Urrutibehety). This fully applies to one of the most mysterious thoughts of Heraclitus: "ποταμοῖσι τοῖσιν αὐτοῖσιν ἐμβαίνουσιν, ἕτερα καὶ ἕτερα ὕδατα ἐπιρρεῖ" [On those stepping into rivers (staying the same), other and

other waters flow on].[6] In the concept of *Ruta Dos*, the road is not accidentally conceived as a river and the approaches to the most spiritual core of the world are entirely metaphysical. Moving along the invisible axis of the book, like sailing along a river channel, the reader asks himself, again and again, the winged Heraclitus question. And the answer remains unchanged: it is impossible to step into the same river twice, nor to retrace the same road path without noticing a change. The author develops this fundamental and yet well-known thought in a completely original way, simultaneously empirical, poetic and metaphysical:

> At certain extreme moments I felt that the road forked or, better said, that it opened in a parallel transit, that there were apparently opposite ways of seeing and living the same event, but that nevertheless harmonized in a greater plane of existence. Hermetists call this the principle of polarity, where opposites can be identical. The path can be straight and curved at the same time, as Heraclitus said. Cold and heat are expressions of the same phenomenon: temperature. It is a way to overcome dichotomous thinking. (Calabrese)[7]

In the context of a completely different era in the history of mankind: a time of new cold wars and hot battles, with a new kind of "post-Covid" morality, in which life and death are not two sides of the same thing, but they are literally one and the same side, this very poetry offers alternative solutions for living in spirituality. And again, this is precisely *Ruta Dos*, or *the second way* of rescuing humanity at a returned historical moment, when the feeling is that the 'ship is sinking' in the stormy waters of capricious variability. Moreover, life and death apparently occur in the same waters in poems such as "The Australian Reservoir", "Careful with Reality", "After the Fire Has Passed", "Race with Plato", "Omen," etc. And, especially, the poem "Calle sin salida" [Dead End], which is about the illusions not only of one person, but also of an entire generation, of an entire era. Encountering yourself in the border zone between dream and reality is like kissing a mirror whose atoms are made from the nostalgic memory of the scattered things. In these most intimate moments, the poet is completely alone, between life and death, stretching out his hands to the abyss, dancing on the flame of burning time.

What does existential dread taste like? And the doubt?

Here are the possible answers given by the poet himself during the mentioned above interview:

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[6] *Cratylus* 402a, Plato; https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heraclitus/.

[7] This particular quote is from a special interview with the poet, which was part of the presentation of his book at Dada Cultural Bar on May18th 2022 in Sofia, Bulgaria. The literary critic who presented Calabrese's poetry for the first time to a Bulgarian audience was precisely the author of this article. The interview in itself remains unpublished.

I started writing once I returned from the Malvinas war, where I was recruited as a soldier by the Argentine army to face the British forces, along with thousands of teenagers just out of high school . . . Maybe it was that borderline experience that pushed me into writing. At that age, it's like a profanation of conscience that circumstances force you to think about death all the time. I remember that I was more worried about the idea of killing than dying, because the events unfolded in such an unappealable way that there was nothing to decide, nothing I could do to change reality. If I had to die, I couldn't have prevented it either. Killing, on the other hand, was something that could be controlled with the will, somehow pulling the trigger of a rifle was in the narrow margin of my personal decision. In the midst of all that I experienced some very intense *déjà vu*, I felt that life offered parallel paths, where the physical and the transcendent were balanced. As for others it may be religion, I feel that poetry is a key to the understanding of the secret plot of existence. (Calabrese)

This painfully frank confession refers to such existential questions, which are extremely relevant even today, when the unthinkable is happening: Slavs killing Slavs on the orders of the irresponsible dictatorship. That is why *the second path*, the path of human spirituality, cannot be salutary without forgiveness and mercy, after the blind eyes of cruelty. Therefore, most of the characters in *Ruta Dos* are transcendental creatures, living between this world and the other, or between this and the other side of the "highway" of life: the drowning man who drowns not in a river but in the dirt; the idiot who self-inquiries with a perverse pleasure in pain; the watchmaker who weighs time, light and life; the publican who keeps following the thread of time as he collects his taxes; the hunter who dreams that he is the mightiest animal; the trees that speak in a whisper, and after a long listening, the author finally manages to hear the words: crosses, humiliation, mirage, and others of the like. The only constant character of this book, distinguished from these strange creatures, wandering on their way and without a change in the hierarchy of the value system, is the father of the poet. He holds in his hands the invisible compass that leads to *the second path* incarnated by the *Homo Poeticus*, the path of a possible spiritual salvation.

The image of the father crosses the book from beginning to the very end, moving from one poem to another, and this circular movement is an existential trajectory of his personal path (which is a part of *the second path*, i.e., *Ruta Dos*), captured by the poet in his spiritual dimensions. For example, in the poem "El músico" [The Musician], the father appears as a kind of Daedalus, concerned about his fragile flying Icarus, and the injured musician, who keeps returning and his path is always described in a circular form —"largo viaje circular" [a long journey in a circle] (93)— certainly, it is largely the poet himself.

The lyrical character moves in a circle also in the poem "Comparaciones" [Comparisons]: "ando en círculos" [I go in a circle] (48). And in "El tanque

australiano" [The Australian Tank], Calabrese not only compares the circles of Dante's Hell, some of which he was forced to go through on his own path, but also summarizes: "Todo era redondo: el horizonte no aparecía" [Everything was round, the horizon did not appear] (26). In this same poem, the father also draws the invisible guiding and salvific signs: "La Cruz del Sur" [The Southern Cross] (24), "La Espada de Orión" [The Sword of Orion] (45), etc. Then his image disappears, melts like a hologram in the magnetic field of the waters of death, and after him the poet himself voluntarily sinks into the black waters of transience, surrenders to their insatiable ferocity, amounting to oblivion, to emerge again into the world of the living "después de muchos años" [many years from now] (26). As a counterpoint to this memory-absorbing metaphysics, Calabrese emphasizes certain object-symbols, among which we would single out the flame of the father's "bicicleta roja" [red bicycle] in the poem "Las diferencias entre mi padre y Kerouac" [Differences between my father and Kerouac] (32). At the same time, the reader finds the similarities between the father and Kerouac, of course, immediately in the very passage of the Road, and not so much in its direction. Surprisingly, the semiotics of the red color of the bicycle contrast interestingly with the words that the father and Kerouac "detestaron el comunismo" [hated communism] (32). But at the expense of this, the father was a devout "peronista" [Peronist] until the end of his life:

> Pero mi padre, que era peronista, se *emborrachó*
> una sola vez en toda su vida. (32)
>
> But my father, who was a Peronist,
> got drunk only once in his lifetime.

The irony in these verses is obvious: the allusion is to the political affiliation of the poet's father, who in his modest life followed Juan Perón's famous recommendation: "For Peronism, there is only one class of person: those who work" (43).The contrast between the figure of the father and Kerouac's image is entirely within the context of the metaphor of the road, creating an interesting parallel between the "exclusivity" of Kerouac's personality and the father's "invisibility", who wins sympathy with his beautiful modesty, restraint and devotion. On the other hand, the metaphor of the red bike is a strong generator of existential energy in the unsurprisingly traveled route of the invisible, honest Latin American man, father and worker in the system of limited opportunities of his environment in the second half of the 20th century. The poem "El tanque australiano" ["The Australian Tank"] is a written reconstruction of this particular memory. There, the fragile figure of the father gives way to the large-scale metaphor of the road, gathering in the same point the paradigms of time and existence:

Hasta que las aspas del molino
giraron de nuevo.
Cada succión del agua de la tierra
traía, como un golpe de remo, los recuerdos,
uno tras otro:
la bicicleta, el camino de tierra,
la puerta quejumbrosa de la casa,
las veredas del pueblo desbordadas por la grama.
El motor de algún camión sobre la Ruta Dos
ahogaba unos minutos el coro de las ranas.

(Calabrese, "El tanque australiano" 26)

Then the blades of the mill
began to turn again.
Any suction of water from the ground,
like a stroke of an oar, it carried memories
one after another:
the bike, the dirt road,
the groaning door of the house,
the village pavements overgrown with weeds.
The engine of a truck on the Ruta Dos
silenced the frog chorus for a bit.

["The Australian Tank"]

At the same time, the poet masterfully leads the reader to a meeting with the pure spiritual image of the father, recalling very clearly the acoustics of his words and gestures —a few moments before he disappeared without a trace in the great water. Subsequently, the poet voluntarily immerses himself completely in this water of forgetfulness and forgiveness, sinks completely, disappears for a long time, and then still manages to surface, purified as after a spiritual catharsis: "Y tuve que emerger después de muchos años" [And I had to emerge after many years] (26).

The energy of each of the texts of this powerful poetry can be felt by both the European and the Latin American reader in its different editions of the book. The collection of poems stands surprisingly stable and large-scale, but at the same time internally fluid, like a vast water channel, it is both variable and unified. The content impresses with its homogeneity and strong concentration in the eternal themes of the Path as inner (spiritual) time and of the Time as a path to oneself. This meeting between Road and Time gives rise to precisely this catharsis between the experience of life and death, which the author went through before synthesizing it in his poetry, which applies to *Compás de espera* as well.

It is probably not without significance that *Ruta Dos* was originally published in Spanish by Editorial Aguilar in Santiago de Chile —after the

manuscript won a Books Magazine Award (2013), organized by the newspaper *El Mercurio* every four years for best unpublished book in the poetry genre. Zurita himself was on the jury. Years later, the book was published by the prestigious Visor publishing house in Madrid with an introduction by Zurita. Then, it was also published in Cuba by Editorial Matanzas and in Brazil by Editorial Macondo, in translation by Prisca Agustoni, with the same prologue, which can also be read in Bulgarian, thanks to the new edition of the book in 2022. Its Italian edition also had an extraordinary fate. The translator is Alessio Brandolini, poet and editor from the Roman publishing house Fili d'Aquilone. His translation was nominated for the 2016 Camaiore Prize and was honored among the five best foreign poetry works in Italy. In addition to translations into Italian, Portuguese and Bulgarian, parts of the book have been translated into French, English, Chinese, Greek, Azerbaijani and Romanian.

The poetry of Calabrese is like a deep well filled with healing water. To reach it, however, it is necessary not only to lean towards the deepest, but also to have the courage to hang over the edge of the abyss long enough to see in the slow movement of abstract shadows on the surface the whole picture of being. It is these shadows of the truth-of-being, like the myth of Plato's cave, that the poet clearly caught and skillfully and mercilessly fixed in his poems. In this sense, it is poetry about the objective Truth, but also about its subjective interpretations, those that each reader keeps deep inside. It is precisely this poetry, as a kind of panacea, that is needed in the world, strongly shaken by wars, epidemics and crises of spirituality. Poetry as a way out, but also a way into oneself. And *Ruta Dos*, the second existential and spiritual path for the seeker of the truth about himself and the world, has been written and traveled by an Argentinian *Homo Poeticus* seeking to account for our experience of life in this world.

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